SITUATIONAL HANDICAPS AND REACTIONS TO PERFORMANCE FEEDBACK: INTERPERSONAL DETERMINANTS OF AUGMENTING AND DISCOUNTING EFFECTS

By

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A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

1992

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am most grateful to Dr. Barry Schlenker, who gave me guidance during my graduate career and provided countless opportunities to improve my training. His knowledge of the field and commitment to scientific psychology continue to be inspiring. I also extend warm thanks to Dr. Mike Weigold, who first suggested that I pursue social psychology and later encouraged me during difficult moments. Finally, I appreciate the work of my research assistants during the data collection phase of the study.

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Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School of the University of Florida in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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August, 1992

Chairman: Dr. Barry R. Schlenker
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Self-handicapping theory predicts that situational handicaps present during a test performance can lead people to discount the negative effects of a poor performance and augment the positive effects of a good performance. The present study examined how the interpretation an evaluative audience places on a performance handicap influences the degree to which augmenting and discounting effects occur. Subjects completed a test of their cognitive skills under conditions where a handicap was either present or absent during performance. They then received feedback indicating that they did well or poorly on the test and believed their performance would be evaluated by a partner. The partner's beliefs about the performance handicap were also varied. In some cases the evaluator indicated that a handicap would

help to excuse a failure, but would not augment a success (discounting interpretation). In other cases the evaluator indicated that a handicap would help augment a success, but would not excuse a failure (augmentation interpretation). Results showed that subjects who failed invariably blamed the handicap for their performance. They remained buffered from the impact of the failure only when they knew the evaluator would accept this as a valid explanation for their poor performance. They experienced a less negative mood and reported enjoying the testing session more than subjects who had no information about their partner's views. Similarly, subjects who succeeded and felt they were handicapped reported a more positive mood and greater enjoyment of the test, only when the evaluator was likely to interpret the success as especially indicative of ability. In addition, evaluators whose beliefs about the handicap had favorable implications for subjects' identities were viewed as more likeable and supportive than those who beliefs were less favorable. The findings are discussed as evidence for the social nature of the attribution process.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Attribution theories outline the rules that perceivers use to ascribe causes to events (Ross & Fletcher, 1985). In social life often this involves determining whether a person's actions and their consequences are due to stable personal dispositions and abilities or reflect the influence of more transient causes. The attributions perceivers make are important because they both determine their impressions of people and help to guide their actions toward them.

People are aware that their actions are used to characterize them and work to influence the attributions that perceivers make (Jones & Wortman, 1973; Schlenker, 1980). For instance, it has been repeatedly documented that people are self-serving when explaining their own behavior, taking personal responsibility for positive events, like a good test performance, but attributing negative events to external influences (Greenwald & Breckler, 1985). People also rearrange their environments to affect the attributions others are likely to make. Self-handicapping is such a strategy (Berglas & Jones, 1978). It involves creating an impediment to successful

performance that, although paradoxically increasing the likelihood of failure, also diminishes the negative implications of a failure for one's self- and social-image. For example, consider the student who cannot find time to study for a major exam. In the event of a poor test performance, the student can attribute it to lack of preparation rather than lack of intelligence. In the event of a good performance, an attribution to ability may be enhanced.

Research shows that when people are concerned about failure on a task, they will adopt a variety of performance handicaps to manage the attributions that can be made about their performance (see Snyder, 1991). Less work has been done on the consequences of handicaps once the performance occurs, however. For instance, do actors cite the influence of a handicap strategically when explaining their performance to an evaluative audience? Do the audience's beliefs about the meaning of the handicap influence the actor's public explanations? And what influence do these attributions have on the actor's personal reactions to the performance and the actor's perceptions of the audience? This paper addresses each of these questions and a study is described which attempts to answer them. In the next chapter an overview of basic attributional principles is presented. This is followed

by a discussion of motivational biases in the attribution process and self-handicapping theory. Within this context the research questions are raised and hypotheses are developed.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW AND STUDY OVERVIEW

Attribution Theory: Overview

Heider's (1958) work on person perception marks the starting point for attribution theories in social psychology. His "naive theory" of causal attribution provided a useful framework for thinking about the conditions that provide observers with information concerning the dispositional characteristics of actors and the conditions under which people are seen as responsible for outcomes. From Heider's ideas derived two others theories describing the attributional principles observers use.

In 1965, Jones and Davis advanced their theory of correspondent inferences to explain the impressions people draw from other people's behavior. Their theory was especially concerned with how people form inferences about the intentions and dispositional characteristics of others. They argue that these inferences derive from the desirability and uniqueness of the effects that the behavior has. For example, if it is concluded that an actor had the foresight and ability to produce the consequences of an action (e.g., hurting another person),

the probability is high that he or she will be regarded as having intended to produce the consequence, and it is more likely that a dispositional attribution will be made (e.g., he or she is a nasty person). Similarly, if the action has a unique consequence (i.e., noncommon effects), compared to those of other possible actions, or has a limited number of desirable consequences, the probability increases that those consequences will be considered the goal of the action.

In contrast to Jones and Davis' model, Kelley's (1967) covariation theory of attribution focused on the assignment of causality to all possible aspects of the environment, including objects and situations and people. Kelley proposed that attributions concerning causes are most likely to focus on those aspects of the environment that covary with the outcomes to be explained. For example, a person is likely to be seen as the cause of an event if the person is associated with the event across differing circumstances (low distinctiveness), if the person is regularly associated with the event (high consistency), and other people rarely are associated with the event (low consensus).

In later work Kelley (1971) recognized that perceivers rarely have access to the complete information pattern required by the covariation model. He proposed the principles of discounting and augmentation as

descriptions of the simplifying heuristics people might use under these conditions. Discounting refers to the fact that when an outcome is associated with more than one possible cause, the attribution to any one of these causes will be weaker than if it stands as the only available cause. The augmentation principle indicates that the attribution of causality to a given entity is enhanced if the outcome occurred despite the presence of inhibiting factors. These principles are crucial to the effects of performance handicaps on attributions to be discussed shortly.

Self-Serving Biases in Attribution

From the time of Heider's original work, it had been recognized that personal wishes and needs might influence attributions, particularly when made about self-relevant events. One motivational bias to receive a great deal of attention is the tendency for people to attribute success to their own dispositions while attributing failures to external forces. This has been labelled the self-serving or egotistical bias, and has been documented numerous times, in a variety of experimental and field settings (see Pyszczynski & Greenberg, 1987; Weary-Bradley, 1978; Zukerman, 1979, for reviews). Self-serving biases typically are interpreted as a means of protecting or enhancing self-esteem, or the social image one projects to others. From the perspective of the theories just

reviewed, they help actors avoid unfavorable dispositional attributions for failure (i.e., incompetence) while reinforcing dispositional attributions for success. Consistent with Kelley's discounting principle, emphasizing the role of external factors (e.g., luck, task difficulty) in causing a negative outcome should serve to discount esteem-building factors like ability.

Some authors (Miller & Ross, 1975; Nisbett & Ross, 1980; Tetlock & Levi, 1982) have argued that self-serving attributions do not have a motivational basis, but instead result from faulty information processing. While cognitive factors undoubtedly play a role, recent evidence, indicating that the self-serving bias is magnified when (a) individuals are ego-involved in the task (Miller, 1976), (b) their attributions are open to public scrutiny and flattering claims can be defended (Frey, 1978; Weary, 1980), or (c) they are experiencing residual arousal from some other source, is more difficult to resolve in a purely cognitive framework (see Pyszczynski & Greenberg, 1987, for a review of these issues).

Self-Handicapping

In 1978, Jones and Berglas (1978; Berglas & Jones, 1978) introduced an interesting twist on the self-serving bias notion. They suggested that certain individuals, those who are highly invested in some performance domain

but have doubts about their true abilities, arrange circumstances preemptively to capitalize on the discounting and augmentation principles. These individuals adopt some obstacle to success before or during an important performance, which could serve as a ready excuse if they fail, but enhances the benefits of a success. They labelled this strategy self-handicapping and defined it as "any action or choice of performance setting which enhances the opportunity to externalize (or excuse failure) and internalize (or reasonably accept credit for) success" (Berglas & Jones, 1978, p.405).

In the typical self-handicapping design, subjects expect to complete an achievement task under conditions of either high or low certainty of success. They are then given a choice of performance contexts in which an obstacle to successful performance is present (handicapped condition) or is not present (nonhandicapped condition). Generally, it is found that when subjects are uncertain of success, they are more likely to choose handicapped over nonhandicapped contexts than when success is more certain.

In their initial demonstration of the effect, for instance, Jones and Berglas (1978) had subjects complete a test of intellectual ability and gave them success feedback perceived as either contingent or not contingent on their test performance. Prior to completing a second test, subjects were given the opportunity to ingest a drug

which inhibited intellectual performance or one which enhanced it. It was found that males were more likely to choose the inhibiting drug when their prior success was noncontingent than contingent on their performance. Subsequent research has documented that individuals are willing to adopt a variety of handicaps under conditions of uncertainty, including alcohol, music, noise, and effort withdrawal (see Snyder, Higgins & Berglas, 1990, for reviews).

The domain of self-handicapping has broadened to include what Leary and Shepperd (1986) have labelled self-reported handicaps. These refer to actors' verbal claims that their performance was hampered by some factor outside their control rather than a behavioral strategy in which success is actually made less likely. As an example of this approach, Smith, Snyder, and Handelsman (1982) had high and low test anxious subjects complete an initial, very difficult test of intellectual ability and then asked them to report how anxious they felt while completing it. It was found that when high anxious subjects were led to believe that anxiety could debilitate performance on the test, they reported feeling more anxious than when they thought it would have no effect on performance. Thus, when anxiety was seen as an effective excuse for failure, anxious subjects exaggerated their claims about its effects on performance. This occurred despite the fact

that information about the effect of anxiety on performance was not presented until after the test was completed.

Attributional Consequences of Handicaps

Whether behaviorally or verbally established, performance handicaps are theorized to operate by influencing attributions, distancing the actor from the impact of negative outcomes, and associating the actor with positive outcomes (Kelley, 1971; Snyder, 1991). There is considerable support for the idea that performance handicaps will reduce apparent responsibility for negative events. First, self-serving bias research has shown that individuals will avoid attributing failures to central aspects of identity such as ability or intelligence (Higgins & Snyder, 1988), and instead claim that various nonability influences are responsible for their performance (e.g., task difficulty, luck, low effort). This work provides only indirect support for self-handicapping theory, since the existence of a performance handicap rarely is explicitly manipulated.

Second, studies that have measured observer attributions for the negative behavior of actors who are handicapped or not (Schouten & Handelsman, 1987; Richardson & Campbell, 1980) have found that actors typically are assigned less responsibility and blame for negative actions (e.g., job loss, physical abuse) when

some external cause for the outcome is made salient (e.g., depressive symptoms, drunkenness).

Two other studies that have measured actor's attributions for their behavior after explicitly manipulating the presence of a performance handicap also support the attributional distancing idea. Isleib, Vuchinich and Tucker (1988) found that subjects who were told they had ingested alcohol prior to a test of concept formation attributed their performance more to the alcohol and less to personal ability following failure than following success. Rhodewalt et al. (1991) replicated this finding using distracting music as a handicap. They also showed that subjects who scored high on a self-report measure of self-handicapping were especially likely to attribute a failure to the influence of the music.

No research has directly addressed whether the presence of performance handicaps will augment personal responsibility for a success. However, a study by Quattrone and Jones (1980) suggests that people are aware of the augmenting potential of handicaps. They had subjects imagine themselves as actors hoping to be cast in the role of Scrooge in a theater production of a Christmas Carol. They were supposedly about to undergo an interview with the director and were asked to indicate what type of information they would like to disclose about themselves during the interview. When subjects believed they did not

have an opportunity to audition for the part prior to the interview, they preferred to disclose performance facilitative factors, such as the fact that they had successfully played Scrooge in the past. However, when subjects believed that they had already auditioned for the role prior to the interview and received positive feedback from the director, they chose to disclose facts about themselves perceived as inhibiting rather than facilitating successful performance. These inhibitory factors included the fact that they had not held a major role in the past five years or that they had never played a role similar to Scrooge in the past. These findings were replicated using an alternative scenario and show that, at least under highly structured, role-play conditions, people say they would strategically disclose performance debilitating factors as a means of enhancing perceptions of their ability.

One goal of the present study was to examine the attributional consequences of performance handicaps. Subjects completed an intellectual test under conditions where a performance impediment was present or absent. They then received feedback about how they did and made attributions for their performance. It was hypothesized that, in general, subjects would attribute their performance to external circumstances more when they believed they were handicapped than when they believed that they were not handicapped.

Audiences for Self-Serving Activities

A second goal was to examine how interpersonal factors moderate the impact of performance handicaps on attributions and private self-evaluations. Researchers have debated whether self-handicapping and other self-serving strategies are primarily intended to influence how people explain their own actions or to influence how their actions are explained by others (Arkin & Baumgardner, 1985; Weary & Arkin, 1981; Tetlock & Manstead, 1985; Weary-Bradley, 1978). In their initial writings on the concept, Jones and Berglas (1978; Berglas & Jones, 1978) emphasized that self-handicaps help to preserve self-esteem. Though they noted that handicaps could be adopted to impress others, the focus of the concept was on the self.

Subsequent research which has addressed the audience question provides evidence for each position. People generally are more ego-involved when their actions are open to public scrutiny (Baumeister, 1982). In addition, they tailor their public statements to make them believable to external audiences. For instance, people are less flattering in self-descriptions when audiences are aware or will become aware of information that would contradict their claims (Baumeister & Jones, 1978; Doherty & Schlenker, 1991; Schlenker, 1975; Ungar, 1980). Also,

self-serving attributions are reduced when there is some source present that may invalidate the actor's explanation (Arkin et al., 1979; Arkin et al., 1980; Frey, 1978; Schlenker, Weigold, & Hallam, 1991). In one study (Arkin et al., 1980), subjects' attributions for a success or failure were measured through a regular paper-and-pencil technique or using a bogus pipeline technique, which subjects believed could measure their true beliefs. It was found that subjects externalized failure less when the experimenter might contradict their explanations with information gained through the bogus pipeline than when attributions were measured in the typical way. In addition, these effects are stronger among socially anxious individuals, who are particularly sensitive to the defensibility of their accounts. Similarly, Frey (1978) found that subjects' attributions about their performance corresponded with publicly known information but became more flattering when public constraints were absent. In the only study that varied the characteristics of the audience, Schlenker, Weigold, & Hallam (1991) showed that individuals are more self-serving to an audience they perceive as supportive and trusting than one who is critical and skeptical, and therefore likely to challenge their claims. In public, interpersonal concerns clearly influence the causal ascriptions people will make.

Nevertheless, self-serving attributions have been demonstrated under private conditions and under conditions designed to encourage honesty, suggesting that they are sincerely believed and not just manipulative claims (Greenwald, 1980; Riess et al., 1981). In addition, the attributions people make for events can influence their private self-evaluations. Snyder and Higgins (1988) reviewed a large body of evidence suggesting that excuses can reduce negative affect and protect self-esteem following failure. In a prototypical study (McFarland & Ross, 1982), subjects received success or failure feedback on a social judgment task and were induced to attribute the performance to the qualities of the task or to their own ability. It was found that subjects who attributed the failure externally experienced higher self-esteem and more positive affect than subjects who made internal attributions. Similarly, Crocker and Major (1989) have argued that blacks often maintain positive self-esteem in the face of objective disadvantages by attributing their failures to racism rather than to personal causes.

Although it may be possible in specific instances to disentangle empirically whether audience concerns are exclusively internal or external, perhaps a better conclusion to be drawn from these findings is that both one's self and other people are important audiences for

behavior (Greenwald & Breckler, 1985; Schlenker, 1985; Snyder et al., 1983; Tetlock, 1985a). People want to view themselves positively and explain events in ways that make them feel good and competent. However, they want others to view them favorably also. Since their public actions can influence the reputation they build with others (Leary & Kowalski, 1990; Schlenker, 1980), people must consider who the audience is and what this person will believe when formulating explanations and communicating them. People's public claims are made within the constraints imposed by what others will accept (Schlenker & Weigold, 1990, 1992; Tetlock, 1985a).

Rather than assess whether internal or external concerns predominate when people explain their actions, the present study focused on the interaction between public and private sides of the attribution process. Specifically, how do an audience's opinions about the believability of certain explanations influence the attributions people make publicly, and the relationship of these attributions to subsequent private self-appraisals? To create a public context for the session, subjects believed that their test performance would be evaluated by a partner. The partner would have access to their test score and attributions, and would use this information to form an impression of their intellectual skills. Subjects expected to receive a copy of this impression at the close of the session. The partner's beliefs about the validity

of particular interpretations of the handicap were varied before subjects made their attributions. In one condition the partner emphasized the value of the handicap to excuse a failure but denied its value in augmenting a success. The opposite was true in a second condition, where the partner emphasized the handicap's augmenting value but denied it was a valid excuse. Subjects' attributions for the performance were then measured publicly, as were private self-evaluations, in terms of mood, self-esteem and ratings of performance-relevant ability.

The highly evaluative context created by the public test was expected to magnify subjects' desire to receive a favorable evaluation from their partner. Shifting their public attributions to bring them in line with what their partner finds believable may be an effective way for subjects to insure positive evaluations. Agreeing publicly with one's audience reduces the chance of conflict during interaction (Cialdini et al., 1973), increases one's perceived similarity to the audience (Byrne, 1971), and increases one's perceived credibility (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981). Each of these factors is related to positive interpersonal evaluations and research indicates that people often conform strategically to create favorable impressions on others. For instance, work on ingratiation (Jones & Wortman, 1973) reveals the willingness of people to tailor their opinions to those of

others, particularly under evaluative conditions. Also, decision making research indicates that when people are accountable for their decisions, they shift their views toward those of the persons who will evaluate them (Tetlock, 1985b). Opinion agreement is an important heuristic that people use to boost their attractiveness to others.

Based on these findings and the audience invalidation studies reviewed earlier, it was anticipated that subjects would respond to what their partner finds believable when making public attributions. While all failure subjects are likely to externalize a failure by claiming they were hampered by time, this should occur more with a partner who provides a discounting interpretation of the handicap, since subjects know that this person is willing to accept this explanation as valid. It should occur less with a partner who provides an augmenting interpretation of the handicap, since this person is less likely to accept time as a reasonable excuse.

The presence of a handicap also can help augment the benefits of a success, but only when one's audience is aware of the handicap's influence. Following success, it was predicted that reduced time subjects would claim that time affected them more when an augmenting interpretation was provided, since they know their partner would view a handicapped success even more favorably. The opposite was

expected when subjects were paired with a discounting partner who downplays the augmenting value of the handicap. Finally, these audience effects should be reduced among subjects who work under nonhandicapped conditions, since the audience's beliefs are less applicable for these people.

There has been no research directly examining how interpersonal feedback about one's attributions influences their relationship to private self-evaluations. It may operate by modifying subjects' own attributions for the performance. Theorists (Weary & Arkin, 1981; Schlenker, 1980; Scott & Lyman, 1968) have suggested that explaining one's actions often involves negotiation with one's audience. The explanation an actor initially offers for an event is not the finished product. Rather, the actor "suggests one explanation, the audience responds by modifying it slightly or greatly, the actor rejoins, and so forth until a finished product emerges" (Schlenker, 1980, p.152). The finished product represents an account of the event which both the actor and the audience can find acceptable. The actor may come to believe this new version of events, and these revised attributions may then guide the person's private reactions to the event (Weiner, 1986; Peterson & Seligman, 1984). Alternatively, the audience feedback may allow actors to anticipate how others will evaluate their performance. Early symbolic

interactionists (Cooley, 1902; Mead, 1934) stressed that people often infer their attributes and abilities from the actual or expected reactions of others to their behavior. Knowing how their partner views the handicap may help subjects predict this person's attributions and ultimate impressions of them. Contemplating these evaluations can create affective changes, especially when formal feedback is expected (Salovey & Rodin, 1985), and may generalize to related self-dimensions.

These possibilities are not exclusive; either or both may play a role. However, they suggest similar consequences of the audience feedback for private self-evaluations. Subjects should remain relatively insulated from the effects of a negative performance when it is perceived as not personally caused. A failure should therefore reduce self-evaluations less among handicapped subjects paired with a discounting partner than those paired with an augmenting partner. In contrast, a positive performance should be magnified when it is seen as personally caused. Successful subjects should therefore raise their self-evaluations more when they perform under handicapped conditions and their partner augments the performance than when their partner does not. The audience's views should have less impact for nonhandicapped subjects. It is also likely that emotions, which are more malleable, will be influenced more than

core self-evaluations like self-esteem and self-perceived ability.

Interpersonal Perceptions

The study's final goal was to assess subjects' impressions of partners who provide various interpretations of the handicap. Prior research suggests that individuals react more favorably to others who interpret their actions in self-beneficial ways (Sicoly & Ross, 1977; Doherty, Weigold & Schlenker, 1991; Swann et al., 1987). For instance, Doherty et al. gave subjects the opportunity to perform a helpful act and asked them to make attributions for their behavior. They then received interpersonal evaluations attributing either more positive motives than they originally attributed to themselves, less positive motives, or the same balance of positive and negative motives. It was found that actors sharply denigrated the validity of an evaluation that assigned them less positive motives whereas they regarded more positive and same-motive evaluations as highly valid. In the present study subjects rated their partner on several evaluative dimensions, such as liking and supportiveness, rather than rating the accuracy of this person's feedback. It was predicted that subjects would react more favorably to partners whose interpretations of the handicap protect or enhance their preferred identities. Subjects who fail should rate a partner who discounts the failure more

positively than one who does not discount the performance. Subjects who succeed should rate a partner who augments the success more positively than one who does not. Again, these effects should be more apparent for subjects in the reduced time condition, for whom the audience's views have personal relevance.

To summarize, the core of the design reflects a 2 (performance: success, failure) X 2 (performance handicap: present, absent) X 3 (audience interpretation: augmenting, discounting, no information) factorial. Subjects completed an intellectual test under conditions where a performance handicap was present or absent. They then received success or failure feedback on the test and made attributions for the performance to a partner. Some subjects were paired with a partner who felt the handicap only helped discount a failure, others were paired with a partner who felt the handicap only helped augment a success. Subjects in a third group received no information about their partner's views. A pair of no-performance-feedback groups were also included in which the presence of a handicap was varied.

CHAPTER 3
METHOD

Subjects

Two hundred twenty-five introductory psychology students (83 males and 142 females) participated individually as fulfillment of a course requirement. The proportion of males to females was approximately equal in each condition and about equal numbers of subjects were run by male and female experimenters.

Procedure

The session was described as a study of impression formation regarding cognitive/analytical abilities (see Appendix A). Subjects believed that they would take part in a simulated interaction involving a second participant who reported to another laboratory. The subject and the partner would be randomly assigned a role to play in the study, as either the Perceiver or the Target. The Target would provide various information about him- or herself. The Perceiver would use the information to form an impression of the Target's cognitive/analytical abilities. Subjects expected to communicate with their partners through written materials only; there would be no face-to-face interaction. However, to maintain a belief in the

partner's existence, the experimenter stressed the importance of synchronizing activities in the two labs, and pretended to communicate with the other lab at several points in the session.

After the subject provided informed consent, the role assignment was made. The experimenter showed subjects an apparently random listing of experimental sessions and roles. Through a prearranged procedure the subject always was assigned to be the Target person; the partner was assigned to be the Perceiver. It was explained then that the subject would give two types of information to the Perceiver during the impression formation phase of the study (see Appendix B). The first type would be the Target's performance on the Feldman-Collier Cognitive-Analytical Skills Battery (FCCASB), a recently developed test of cognitive analytical abilities. Since the test was computer scored, the results would be available immediately. The second type of information would be the Target's responses to a series of questionnaire items regarding his/her cognitive/analytical skills. The Target would complete these measures following the FCCASB. The Perceiver would use all of the information available to form an impression of the Target. At the end of the session, the Target would find out what type of impression the Perceiver had formed.

The possibility of a performance handicap was introduced during the description of the FCCASB. It was mentioned that since the test was recently created, its developers were interested in how different testing conditions influence performance. Currently, they were looking at the impact of time allotment. Target person's in different sessions would be given different amounts of time to work on the test. Some would receive the normal amount, whereas others would receive a reduced amount. The effect of time variation could be measured by comparing scores under these two conditions. Targets were told that the amount of time given would be determined randomly. They and the Perceiver would find out whether this reflected the full or reduced allotment only after the test. The delay was justified to subjects as a means of reducing expectancy effects on performance. It also insured that all participants were treated identically prior to the test. When the experimenter was certain that the instructions and procedure were clear, the Target began the test.

The FCCASB Test

The test instructions and questions were presented on a computer and subjects responded on scantron sheets. All subjects were given 20 minutes for the test. They were encouraged to complete as many items as possible, but to

avoid random guessing since a penalty would be assessed for incorrect responses. Before the test subjects were not told whether the 20 minutes reflected the normal or reduced time condition. Since only one item was displayed at a time, subjects were unaware how many questions were on the test.

The FCCASB contained multiple choice items taken from the GRE and similar achievement tests. It included logical and analytical reasoning problems, analogies, and math problems. To insure that no one finished the test, it was made long (65 items) and challenging (see Appendix C for representative items). The experimenter began timing when subjects finished the instructions and left the room during the testing period. Test Scoring and Audience Information

After 20 minutes the experimenter began the test scoring. Subjects were told that their responses would be graded in a nearby room. A performance summary containing their time condition and score would be saved to a computer disk and later printed. Before leaving the room, the experimenter handed subjects a Perceiver Background Questionnaire to read while their tests were graded (see Appendix D).

The questionnaire supposedly was completed by the Perceiver and was to provide Targets with some personal

information about their partner. The initial sections contained responses to a series of demographic questions (e.g., age, major, sex), interest items (e.g., favorite films, career goals) and feelings about the experimental session (enjoyment, importance). Responses to these items were the same for all subjects with the exception that the Perceiver always was portrayed as the same gender as the subject.

The Perceiver's interpretation of the time reduction manipulation was presented in response to a final question, which stated, "How do you feel that reducing the time allotted to complete the test might affect a person's performance on the FCCASB?" The Perceiver's hand-written response was constructed to place either a discounting or an augmenting interpretation on the handicap, while challenging the alternative interpretation. In the <u>discounting condition</u> subjects read:

> It depends on the person. Some people like a lot of time to work. They're careful. They go back and check their answers a couple of times. Someone like that might really do bad if their time were cut short. It wouldn't necessarily say anything about how good they really are, though. Other people don't need a lot of time. They work through the problems once and that's it. They don't need to go back. A lot of people think its really impressive to do well when you have less time, like it really shows you know what you are doing. But I don't think it means that much, just that you're the kind of person that works fast.

In the augmenting condition they read the following:

> It depends on the person. Some people don't need a lot of time to work. They go through the problems once and that's it, they're done. I think it would really be impressive to do well when you have less time, like it really shows you know what you are doing. Other people say they like a lot of time to work. They're careful. They go back and check their answers a couple of times. But I think oftentimes they use that as an explanation when they do bad, like they didn't have enough time or something. I don't think such a small time difference should hurt you that much if you really know what you are doing. It just keeps you from looking bad.

Subjects in the no audience information condition were also given a questionnaire to read, but this final question was deleted.

Performance Feedback and Time Condition

The experimenter returned several minutes later with a diskette containing the subject's performance summary. After verifying that the subject had read the Perceiver Background Questionnaire, the experimenter printed the subject's performance summary from the computer on which the subject was tested. The experimenter told the subject to tear-off and read the summary when it finished printing, then left the room to retrieve some questionnaires.

The printed output contained information about the subject's score and time condition. On the time condition summary, subjects in the reduced time condition read that the 20 minutes they had reflected 80% of the time normally

allotted to complete the test. In the nonreduced time condition, the same 20 minutes was described as the amount of time normally allotted. Subjects always were informed that they finished all but three of the questions on the test, regardless of the number they actually completed.

On the score summary, one group of subjects received feedback indicating that they did poorly on the test compared with other college students who had taken it (32nd percentile, failure condition). A second group received feedback indicating that they did well compared to other college students (85th percentile, success condition). A third group (no performance feedback condition) was told by the experimenter that their score summary would be delayed since the scanner was malfunctioning. They were asked to continue with the session until their scores were available. No feedback subjects completed the dependent measures without knowing how they performed.

Dependent Measures

When the Target had examined the summaries for four minutes, the experimenter returned and the dependent measures were presented. Targets first completed a Perceptions Questionnaire (see Appendix E). It contained items tapping subjects' attributions for their test performance on 19-point scales to be described shortly.

Subjects believed that their responses to these measures were public. They would be delivered to the Perceiver during the impression formation phase of the study.

A second, Personal Perceptions Questionnaire was then presented to tap subjects' personal reactions to the test (Appendix F). It contained measures of affect, a self-esteem scale (Rosenberg, 1965), impressions of the Perceiver and the FCCASB test. Subjects responded on 9-point scales. It was stressed to subjects that their responses would not be shown to the Perceiver. The sole purpose of the questionnaire was to evaluate the FCCASB and participants' reactions to it. To enhance feelings of privacy, subjects were told to place no identifying marks on the questionnaires and they sealed their responses in an envelope for later coding. Manipulation checks were then presented (Appendix G), followed by a full debriefing.

CHAPTER 4
RESULTS

Unless otherwise noted all measures were analyzed in 2 (performance: success, failure) by 2 (time allotment: full, reduced) by 3 (audience interpretation: augmenting, discounting, no information) between subjects analyses of variance (ANOVAs). Significant interactions were followed-up through tests of simple effects (Cohen & Cohen, 1975, Keppel, 1982). Comparisons to the no performance feedback conditions used F-tests. Preliminary analyses that included gender as a variable revealed occasional effects, which are summarized in Appendix H. Since these effects did not qualify the findings to be presented, gender was deleted as a factor in the analyses which follow. Readers interested in the correlations among the dependent variables are referred to Appendix I.

Manipulation Checks

Performance Feedback

Subjects perceived their performance on the FCCASB as intended. Subjects in the success condition (M= 7.2) said they did much better than subjects in the failure condition (M=2.2, $F(1,183)$= 1177.43, $p<.0001$). No feedback subjects fell at about the midpoint of the scale (M=4.7) and differed from both other groups ($ps<.001$).

Audience Interpretation

Subjects' understanding of the audience's interpretation of a time reduction was assessed on two items. (1) Would the perceiver view a success as especially impressive when it came under reduced time conditions? (2) Would the perceiver discount a failure as reflective of a person's ability if it came under reduced time conditions? Responses to the two items were treated as repeated measures in an ANOVA along with the performance, time and audience variables. A main effect of item ($F(1,183)= 20.03$, $p<.0001$) and the interaction of item by audience emerged ($F(2,183)= 32.65$, $p<.0001$). The means for the interaction are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Means for the audience interpretation manipulation check.

	Audience Interpretation		
Performance Information	Augment	Discount	No
Success-Impressive	7.7	5.3	7.7
Failure-Discounted	4.9	6.7	6.1

Note. Higher numbers mean a success is more impressive and a failure would be discounted more.

As desired, subjects indicated that a failure would be excused more when the audience provided a discounting rather than an augmenting interpretation ($p<.001$). They also indicated that a success would be enhanced more when the audience provided an augmenting rather than a discounting interpretation ($p<.001$). The means from the no information conditions help clarify these differences. In the absence of feedback from their partner, subjects believed that a time reduction could both augment a success and discount a failure. As desired, feedback from an augmenting partner confirmed the augmenting value of the handicap but reduced its discounting value ($p<.01$ for the comparison of the augmenting-failure condition to the no information-failure condition). Feedback from a discounting partner confirmed the discounting value of the handicap but reduced its augmenting value ($p<.001$ for the comparison of the discounting-success to the no information-success condition).

Time Allotment

Finally, subjects were also aware of their time condition. First, subjects in the reduced time condition ($M= 1.4$) said they were given less time to complete the FCCASB than subjects in full time condition ($M= 5.1$, $F(1,183)= 1069.39$, $p<0001$). Second, when asked to indicate which time condition they were in at the close of

the session, all but one subject did so correctly. This subject was included in the analyses which follow.

Public Measures

The Perceptions Questionnaire contained the attribution measures. Subjects indicated in what way their score was determined by each of five factors: (1) time given to complete the test, (2) cognitive/analytical abilities, (3) test difficulty, (4) effort, and (5) luck. Responses were measured on 19-point scales. The midpoint (0) indicated that the factor had no effect; the endpoints indicated that the factor hurt (-9) or helped their performance (+9). Ratings for each of the five factors were analyzed independently. Recall that subjects believed their responses to these items would be available to the Perceiver.

Time Given

Analysis of subjects' time attributions revealed no significant main effects or interactions (all $ps>.15$). The overall mean ($M= -2.9$) differed significantly from zero ($p<.01$), indicating that all subjects believed that they were hurt by the amount of time they were given. This pattern rules out testing for "pure" discounting and augmenting effects, since these require attributional differences between the reduced and nonreduced time conditions. However, since all subjects indicated that

time hurt their performance, and thus in some sense felt they were handicapped by the time given, effects of the audience's view of this type of handicap on private self-evaluations can still be examined.

Ability

Analysis of subjects' ability attributions revealed main effects of audience ($F(2,183)= 3.23$, $p<.05$) and test performance ($F(1,183)= 95.15$, $p<.0001$). Subjects said that ability was more helpful when they faced an augmenting partner ($M= 3.1$) than a discounting partner ($M=2.0$, $p<.06$) or when they received no audience information ($M=1.5$, $p<.03$). Consistent with previous self-serving bias research, subjects believed that ability helped their performance more when they succeeded ($M= 4.8$) than when they received no feedback ($M= 2.1$), but that it played no role when they failed ($M= -0.1$, all means differ at $p<.01$).

Difficulty of the Test

Attributions to test difficulty also revealed main effects of audience interpretation ($F(2,183)= 3.63$, $p<.03$) and performance feedback ($F(1,183)= 65.03$, $p<.0001$). Subjects who were paired with an augmenting partner said that test difficulty hurt their performance less than discounting and no information subjects (Ms= -2.8, -4.0 and -4.0 for augmenting, discounting and no information;

ps<.03 for the comparisons with the augmenting condition). Although subjects in all three performance conditions believed the difficulty of the test hurt their performance, failure subjects (M= -5.2) said it had a bigger impact than subjects in either the success or no feedback groups (Ms= -1.7 and -3.2, ps<.01 for the comparisons among the groups).

Effort

Analysis of subjects' effort ratings showed only a main effect of performance (F(1,183)= 83.52, p<.0001). Subjects said that effort helped them more when they succeeded or received no feedback than when they failed (Ms= 3.9, 3.2 and -1.2, ps<.01 for the comparisons to the failure group; the success and no feedback groups did not differ).

Luck

Attributions to luck showed only a main effect of performance feedback (F(1,183)= 41.91, p<.0001). Success subjects said that luck helped them more (M= 1.9) than did failure or no feedback subjects (Ms= 0.0 and 0.8, ps<.02 for the comparisons to the success condition).

Summary of Public Measures

Several findings of note emerged on the public attributions. On the time measure, all subjects indicated that they were hurt by the amount of time they were given

to complete the test, but these attributions did not vary with time condition, audience or performance feedback. The audience's views did influence attributions to task difficulty and ability. Subjects paired with an augmenting partner attributed their performance more to ability and less to task difficulty than subjects paired with a discounting partner. Finally, subjects displayed the typical self-serving bias pattern on several measures, attributing their test performance more to personal factors (i.e., ability, effort) and less to external factors (i.e., task difficulty) when they did well than when they did poorly.

Private Measures

The Personal Perceptions Questionnaire contained a variety of items to assess subjects' self-evaluations, impressions of their partner, and impressions of the test and the trait that it measured. Recall that subjects were told that their responses to the questionnaire were not public; they would not be shown to the Perceiver.

Self-Evaluations

Affective reactions following the FCCASB were measured on nine bipolar adjective scales. The items were chosen *a priori* to tap mood and anxiety. A principal components factor analysis of responses suggested that subjects also interpreted them as two independent

dimensions. Two factors emerged from the analysis which when orthogonally rotated, appeared to represent mood and anxiety. The two factors accounted for 81% percent of the variance in responses. On the mood factor the items happy (.88), cheerful (.85), contented (.90), satisfied (.86) and good (.87) loaded most strongly. On the anxiety factor the items worried (.81), anxious (.88), nervous (.88), and jumpy (.84) loaded most strongly. For each subject, composite measures of mood and anxiety were constructed averaging responses to the items loading .35 or higher on that factor. These composites were then entered into the analyses.

Mood

Analysis of the mood measure revealed a main effect of performance ($F(1,183)= 53.85$, $p<.0001$), along with the interaction of performance by audience ($F(2,183)= 3.27$, $p<.04$). The main effect showed that, overall, performance on the test had a direct impact on mood. Subjects reported a better mood after they succeeded ($M= 5.7$) and reported a worse mood after they failed ($M= 4.1$) compared with the no feedback controls ($M= 4.8$, $ps<.02$ for the comparisons to the no feedback group). The means in Table 2 suggest that these reactions were moderated by how the audience would interpret the performance. Knowing that their audience might discount the test alleviated the

negative mood of failure subjects, relative to both the no information ($p<.04$) and augmenting groups ($p<.08$). In fact, the mood of discounting subjects was comparable to that subjects who received no test feedback. In contrast, knowing that their audience might augment the performance boosted the already positive mood of success subjects, compared to the discounting ($p<.07$) and no information conditions ($p<.10$).

Table 2

Mean ratings of mood after the test.

	Audience Interpretation		
Performance Information	Augment	Discount	No
Success	7.1	6.4	6.6
Failure	5.0	5.6	4.8
No Feedback			5.8

Note. Higher numbers reflect more positive mood.

Anxiety and Self-Esteem

Analysis of the anxiety measure revealed no significant effects (all $ps>.12$). A self-esteem score was computed for each subject averaging across the ten items on the Rosenberg scale. Analysis of this measure revealed no significant effects ($ps>.13$).

Ability

A series of fourteen bipolar descriptive adjectives were included to measure performance-related attributes, such as intelligence, competence, and confidence. A principal components factor analysis was performed on responses to assess the structure underlying the items. A scree plot suggested that one factor best accounted for the data, which explained 67% of the variance. The factor seemed to tap competence and loaded with the following items: quick-witted (.77), intelligent (.75), sharp (.79), quick (.82), capable (.57), competent (.58), active (.62), strong (.55), certain (.65) and self-guided (.74). A composite score was computed by averaging the responses of each subjects to these ten items. Four items, analytical, careful, pressured, and conforming did not load on this factor. These items were analyzed separately but showed no significant effects (*p*s>.13).

Analysis of the competence composite revealed a main effect of audience interpretation ($F(2,183)= 4.80$, $p<.01$). This showed that subjects described themselves as less efficacious to a discounting partner ($M= 5.9$) than to an augmenting partner or a partner about whom they had no information (Ms= 6.3 and 6.4, *p*s<.02 for the comparisons with the discounting condition).

Perceptions of the Audience

Subjects' impressions of their partner were measured on a series of bipolar adjective scales. To reduce these items to a smaller number of meaningful dimensions, responses were entered into a principal components factor analysis. Three factors were retained, based on examination of a scree plot, and rotated orthogonally. The factors accounted for 73% of the variance in responses. The first factor tapped how likeable the partner was and loaded with the following items: likeable (.81), friendly (.75), warm (.75), kind (.77), and sincere (.68). The second factor tapped how perceptive the partner was and loaded with the following items: perceptive (.79), accurate (.78), logical (.83), reasonable (.81), wise (.88) and sharp (.75). The third factor tapped how accepting the partner was and loaded with the following items: accepting (.89), understanding (.46) and supportive (.39). Three composites were created for each subject by computing a mean of the items loading .35 or higher on the factor. These composites were used in the analyses.

Likableness

Analysis of the likableness ratings resulted in a main effect of time ($F(1,183)= 4.31$, $p<.04$) and a three-way interaction of performance by time by audience

($F(2,183)= 7.27$, $p<.0009$. The main effect showed that the audience was viewed as more likeable by the reduced time subjects ($M= 5.9$) than by full time subjects ($M= 5.6$). The means for the interaction are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Mean ratings of likableness of the Perceiver.

	Audience Interpretation		
Performance Information	Augment	Discount	No
Success			
Full	6.2	6.8	6.7
Reduced	7.1	6.7	6.8
Failure			
Full	7.1	7.2	5.9
Reduced	6.5	7.4	7.2
No Feedback			
Full			6.8
Reduced			6.4

Note. Higher numbers reflect more positive ratings of the Perceiver.

It is first worth noting that subjects' perceptions of the audience were influenced by failure feedback in the

absence of information about their partner's views. Prior to receiving test feedback, subjects in the full and reduced time conditions perceived their partner about equally ($p>.25$, by F-comparisons). After finding out they failed, however, the perspectives of full and reduced time subjects diverged considerably. Full time subjects then saw their partner as less likeable ($p.03$), while reduced time subjects saw their partner as more likeable ($p<.04$). The latter finding presumably reflects subjects' expectation that their partner would discount the failure; subjects in the reduced time-discounting condition, where this expectation was created explicitly, were about equally favorable toward their partner.

In addition, simple interactions of performance by audience for the reduced time conditions ($F(2,183)= 4.10$, $p<.03$) and performance by time for the augmenting partner conditions ($F(1,183)= 9.87$, $p<.01$) showed that subjects reacted very differently to an augmenting partner depending on how they performed. Reduced time, failure subjects, for whom the excuse value of time reduction was removed, rated the partner as less friendly than subjects in the reduced time, discounting condition ($p<.01$) or reduced time, no information condition ($p<.05$) and than full time, failure subjects ($p<.08$). In contrast, reduced time, success subjects viewed the same augmenting partner

most positively, compared both with subjects in the success, full time ($p<.03$) and failure, reduced time conditions ($p<.08$). Reduced time, success subjects also showed a nonsignificant tendency to rate their partner as more positive than subjects in the reduced time, discounting and no information conditions.

Acceptingness

Analysis of the accepting ratings revealed main effects of time ($F(1,183)= 4.79$, $p<.03$ and audience ($F(2,183)= 14.49$, $p<.0001$) and a three-way interaction of performance by time by audience ($F(2,183)= 6.31$, $p<.002$). Reduced time subjects rated their partner as more accepting than full time subjects (Ms= 6.6 and 6.2). Also, a discounting audience ($M= 7.1$) was rated as more accepting than either an augmenting audience ($M=6.0$) or a no information audience ($M= 6.3$, ps<.01 for the comparisons to the discounting group). The means for the interaction are shown in Table 4.

Similar to the friendliness measure, subjects' ratings of their partner were influenced by negative feedback even when they had no explicit information about this person. Before receiving performance information, no feedback subjects were about equivalent in their ratings of the audience in the full and reduced time conditions ($p>.15$). After receiving a failing score, reduced time

subjects saw their partner as significantly more accepting ($p<.05$), while full time subjects saw their partner as somewhat less accepting ($p<.10$).

Table 4

Mean ratings of the acceptingness of the Perceiver.

	Audience Interpretation		
Performance Information	Augment	Discount	No
Success			
Full	5.4	7.1	6.7
Reduced	6.6	6.8	6.4
Failure			
Full	5.9	6.7	5.6
Reduced	5.8	7.5	6.7
No Feedback			
Full			6.3
Reduced			5.8

Note. Higher numbers mean the Perceiver was rated as more accepting.

Follow-up analyses among subjects who failed revealed simple main effects of audience ($F(2,183)= 9.86$, $p<.0001$) and time ($F(1,183)= 5.02$, $p<.03$; the simple interaction of

time by audience was not significant, $F(2,183)= 2.27$, $p>.12$). The audience effect showed that failure subjects perceived a discounting partner as more accepting ($M=7.1$) than either an augmenting partner or a partner about whom they had no information ($Ms= 5.9$ and 6.2, $ps<.05$ for comparisons to the discounting group). The time effect showed that reduced time subjects perceived their partner as more accepting than full time subjects ($Ms= 6.7$ and 6.1). Among subjects who succeeded on the test, a simple interaction of time by audience emerged ($F(2,183)= 4.66$, $p<.03$). The interaction resulted from the fact that full time, augmenting subjects viewed their partner as significantly less accepting than either full time, discounting or no information subjects ($F(2,183)= 9.06$, $p<.001$, for the simple-simple main effect of audience, $ps<.01$, for the individual comparisons). There were no differences among the audience conditions for success subjects under reduced time conditions ($p>.15$).

Perceptiveness

Main effects of audience ($F(2,183)= 9.35$, $p<.0001$) and time allotment ($F(1,183)= 3.66$, $p<.057$) were found on subjects' ratings of their partner's perceptiveness. A discounting partner was viewed as more perceptive ($M= 7.1$) than either an augmenting partner ($M= 6.2$) or a partner whose views were unknown ($M= 6.3$, $ps<.01$). Also, subjects

said their partner was more perceptive when they had reduced than full time (*M*s= 6.7 and 6.3).

Perceptions of the Test, Trait and Performance

The Personal Perceptions Questionnaire also contained several items tapping subjects' perceptions of the FCCASB test and the trait that it measured. These measures are presented below.

Enjoyment of the Test

Subjects' ratings of how much they enjoyed the FCCASB revealed main effects of performance ($F(1,183)= 11.63$, $p<.001$) and time allotment ($F(1,183)= 4.89$, $p<.03$) and the interaction of performance by time by audience ($F(2,183)= 4.50$, $p<.01$). Subjects enjoyed the test more when they had reduced than full time (*M*s= 4.9 and 4.2). They also enjoyed it more when they succeeded (*M*= 5.1) than when they failed or received no feedback (*M*s= 4.1 and 4.3, ps<.04 for the comparisons with the success condition).

The means for the interaction are displayed in Table 5. A simple interaction of performance by audience emerged among reduced time subjects ($F(2,182)= 5.39$, $p<.03$). This showed that when subjects failed and expected their partner to discount the performance, they enjoyed the test significantly more than when their partner augmented ($p<.01$) and somewhat more than no information subjects ($p<.09$). Subjects paired with an

augmenting partner, in turn, enjoyed the test less than no information subjects ($p<.09$, $F(2,183)= 5.58$, $p<.02$ for the simple-simple main effect of audience in the reduced time, failure condition).

Table 5

Mean ratings of the enjoyment of the test.

Performance Information	Audience Interpretation		
	Augment	Discount	No
Success			
Full	4.6	4.5	4.7
Reduced	6.2	5.6	4.7
Failure			
Full	4.4	4.1	3.1
Reduced	3.1	5.4	4.3
No Feedback			
Full			4.3
Reduced			4.3

Note. Higher numbers mean the test was rated as more enjoyable.

Reduced time subjects who succeeded enjoyed the test significantly more when their partner would augment the

success than when they had no partner information ($p<.03$) and somewhat less than subjects who had a discounting partner. There was no evidence that enjoyment ratings differed significantly for full time allotment subjects ($p>.15$ for the time by audience simple interaction among full time subjects).

Test Validity

Subjects were also asked to rate the validity of the FCCASB. On this measure a main effect of performance ($F(1,183)= 11.53$, $p<.0001$) and the interaction of performance by audience were found ($F(2,183)= 3.93$, $p<.02$). Subjects saw the test as less valid when they failed ($M= 4.8$) than when they succeeded ($M= 5.8$, $p<.01$); the no feedback group fell intermediate ($M= 5.2$, $ps<.07$ for the comparisons to the other groups). As the means in Table 6 show, the success-failure difference was most pronounced among subjects in the augmenting condition. An augmenting partner led success subjects to perceive the FCCASB as significantly more valid than no information and discounting subjects ($ps<.02$, $F(2,183)= 5.43$, $p<.02$ for the simple main effect of audience in the success condition). An augmenting partner led failure subjects to perceive the FCCASB as somewhat less valid than no information and discounting subjects ($ps<.08$).

Table 6

Mean ratings of the validity of the test.

Performance Information	Audience Interpretation		
	Augment	Discount	No
Success	6.5	5.4	5.2
Failure	4.4	5.1	5.0
No Feedback			5.2

Note. Higher numbers indicate greater test validity.

Importance of Cognitive-Analytical Skills

On the measure of the importance of cognitive-analytical skills to success in life, main effects of time ($F(1,183)= 6.61$, $p<.01$) and audience interpretation emerged ($F(2,183)= 4.52$, $p<.04$). Reduced time subjects ($M= 6.3$) rated the trait as more important than full time subjects ($M= 5.4$). Subjects matched with an augmenting audience said the trait was more important ($M= 6.5$) than subjects with a discounting audience or than subjects given no information ($Ms= 5.5$ and 5.4, $ps<.01$ for the comparisons).

Summary of Private Measures

The audience's view of a time reduction affected subjects' private reactions to performance feedback in several ways. A discounting partner reduced the negative

impact of a failure on the measures of mood and test enjoyment. An augmenting partner enhanced the effects of a success on these measures, and on subjects' perceptions of the test's validity. Also, subjects reacted more favorably to partners who were likely to make more self-supportive attributions about their performance; that is, they rated a partner who would discount a failure as very accepting and likeable, and a partner who would augment a success as especially friendly. Finally, subjects rated themselves as more competent and said that cognitive analytical skills were especially important when they were matched with an augmenting partner compared to a discounting partner.

CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The results will be discussed in the following order. Some general comments about the findings bearing on augmenting and discounting will be presented first. Specific hypotheses about the attribution measures then will be addressed, along with ideas for future research. This is followed by some comments about the interpersonal perception findings and general conclusions.

Augmenting and Discounting Effects

Attribution theories and prior research suggest that performance impediments can influence an actor's reactions to feedback regarding task performance by mitigating the negative effects of a poor performance and enhancing the positive effects of a good performance. The present results show that when the performance is public, and thus open to evaluation by others, the interpretation an audience places on an impediment is a significant moderator of its impact on the actor. Subjects who failed invariably blamed insufficient time for their performance. When they knew their partner would accept this as a valid explanation for their poor performance, they remained buffered from its impact on their affective reactions.

They experienced less negative mood and reported enjoying the testing session more than subjects who had no information about their partner's views. Knowing that their partner would discount the performance helped subjects dismiss its significance for their emotions.

An augmenting partner also had an important influence, serving to embellish the effects of a good test performance. Subjects who succeeded reported greater enjoyment of the test, said it was more valid, and experienced more positive mood when their partner was likely to interpret the success as indicative of ability than when no information about the partner was available. The findings demonstrate that in public the augmenting and discounting effects derived from handicaps are, in part, socially influenced.

Two other aspects of these effects are noteworthy. First, they suggest that social validation may be important in determining the impact of our explanations on our affective reactions to events. Manipulation checks revealed that the audience feedback served mainly to affirm what subjects already believed: a performance impediment would cause their partner to discount a failure and augment a success. However, augmenting and discounting effects on mood and task enjoyment occurred only when this affirmation was explicitly provided. They

did not occur among no information subjects, who held similar beliefs about their partners's interpretation, and made similar attributions for their performance. The impact of audience validation of one's explanations has not been examined in prior research on attributions and affect, since typically both variables have been measured under private conditions. It has been shown that making the potential for invalidation salient via the bogus-pipeline reduces the affective benefits typically associated with excuses (Snyder & Melhman, 1985). The present findings demonstrate that self-serving attributions gain their greatest power to benefit the self when they are confirmed by others. These implications are significant because it is in public that people most often are called to account by audiences prepared to evaluate and comment on the acceptability of their explanations.

Second, the partner's interpretation of the handicap had no impact on mood in the conditions where it implied less favorable evaluations of the performance (i.e., removing the discounting value following failure or the augmenting value following success). Subjects in the latter conditions, especially those who failed, worked to reduce the significance of both the performance and the evaluation they might receive. Failure subjects paired with an augmenting partner claimed that the test was

unenjoyable and invalid, and downplayed their partner's evaluation, attributing this person's opinions about the handicap to a critical, unfriendly nature. These responses effectively buffered subjects against any decrements in mood that might have resulted from the audience's elimination of the excuse. The pattern is consistent with prior work showing that stress-reducing effects accompany the opportunity to derogate an evaluator (Burish & Houston, 1979). The findings also are consistent with prior research indicating that people do not respond indiscriminately to social feedback (Jones, 1973). Instead, they seem to consider the implications of the feedback for their identities first, and open themselves to its influence mainly when it enhances or maintains their desired self-images. When it does not, people are much less susceptible to its impact.

Attribution Measures

It was hypothesized that the audience information would influence subjects' claims about how time affected their performance. Reduced-time subjects were expected to exaggerate the impact of time when their partner would augment a success or discount a failure, and minimize its impact in the opposing conditions. Instead, all subjects indicated that time hurt their performance significantly and there was no evidence that these claims varied with

the across the time, audience, or feedback variables. In hindsight, this makes sense, since all subjects received identical written feedback indicating that they failed to complete three of the test items. It had been expected that the information given about their time allotment condition would also influence subjects' time attributions and create differences between the handicapped and nonhandicapped groups. While manipulation checks indicated that subjects were aware of their time condition, they apparently relied more heavily on the number of problems they failed to finish and their own experience during the test to make attributions about the impact of time.

This pattern of time attributions had important implications for the results. First, the fact that the time allotment manipulation had no impact on time attributions made it impossible to test for pure discounting and augmentation effects on the private measures, which assume attributional differences between handicapped and nonhandicapped conditions. Second, the pattern helps explain the fact that the audience effects on affective reactions were largely unqualified by subjects' time allotment. Since subjects in the full and reduced time indicated that they had insufficient time to their partner, both groups probably assumed that their

partner's views about a time handicap would be applied to evaluate their performance, and were equally influenced by them. In the future a manipulation which more clearly varies the presence or absence of a performance impediment might be used to provide better tests of these hypotheses. For example, handicapped subjects could listen to music during the test and their partner's opinions about the impact of the music on performance could be varied as they were in this study. It is unlikely that nonhandicapped subjects could perceive that had been affected by music under these conditions, since there would be no music playing during the test, and as a result the impact of the audience's opinions should be more specific. This manipulation has a drawback in that subjects would be aware of their handicap condition during the test and this information might influence their actual test performance. Of course, effects of the handicap on test performance and effort could be measured and, if necessary, controlled statistically.

There was evidence that the audience affected public attributions on dimensions other than time. With an augmenting partner subjects attributed their performance more to personal ability and less to the difficulty of the test, and said that cognitive-analytical skills were more important than subjects matched with a discounting

partner. Perhaps in addition to informing subjects about how their partner would interpret a handicap, the audience feedback allowed them to infer something about their partner's personality, as well as something about what their partner likes in others. By viewing the handicap as an opportunity to demonstrate high ability following a success, while noting that a failure would still be diagnostic of low ability, the augmenting partner focused subjects on the implications of the test performance for their personal characteristics. Subjects responded by making more internal attributions.

Further research is needed to determine how subjects' public attributions may have influenced their affective reactions, by modifying subjects' private attributions or by allowing them to anticipate the evaluations they would receive from their partner. For instance, the present design might be modified to manipulate the ultimate publicity of subjects' actions. Some targets expecting to be evaluated by a partner who provides an augmenting or discounting interpretation could have that evaluation canceled, making their performance and attributions private. If the affective reactions found here result from the evaluations subjects anticipate receiving from their partner, these effects should be reduced when the evaluation is eliminated. If they result from private

changes in attributions, making the performance private should have little effect. Including public and private measures of performance attributions would also help separate these possibilities.

Interpersonal Perception Effects

The interpersonal perception findings extend in several ways prior work showing that people prefer others who will validate self-serving explanations for their behavior (Doherty, Weigold & Schlenker, 1991; Sicoly & Ross, 1977). First, effects were found on evaluative dimensions such as liking for the partner and supportiveness. Past research mainly has examined subjects' cognitive reactions to partner feedback (Swann et al., 1988) such as ratings of the accuracy or perceptiveness of the information. Since the evaluative judgments people hold can determine the nature of their initial encounters with others (Snyder, Tanke, & Berscheid, 1977), this extension to evaluative dimensions is important. Second, preferences for supportive others can result from the interpretation of our performance that we anticipate our partner will make, not just from feedback communicating these interpretations. At the time subjects read about their partner's view of the impediment, random assignment insured that their impressions were equivalent across performance and time

conditions. These manipulations, once they were presented, guided subjects' thoughts about their partner's likely attributions and impressions about them. The same partner was viewed as likeable or unlikable, accepting or critical, depending on how subjects themselves performed on the task. Most important, these perceptions were created in the absence of explicit feedback about their partner's ultimate judgments about subjects.

These points underscore the implications of the findings for work on close relationships. There is ample evidence that attributions for partner behavior are related to marital satisfaction (Bradbury & Fincham, 1990). In this research generally it is assumed that attributions operate by influencing the quality of the attributor's behavior toward his/her partner. Favorable or unfavorable attributions generate corresponding behaviors, which influence the quality of the interactions between the partners and their satisfaction. Since we are often able to predict the attributions close others will make about our behavior, the present findings suggest that our partner's attributions may affect us in a different way, by influencing our mood and perceptions of this person before we ever interact.

General Conclusions

The present study supports in two ways the importance of examining the interaction between public and private concerns in the attribution process (Tetlock & Manstead, 1985; Weary & Arkin, 1981). First, the findings suggest that understanding the impact of performance handicaps on people's private reactions to events requires a consideration of who the audience for their behavior is. Self-handicapping theories (Jones & Berglas, 1978) suggest that situational impediments help alleviate the damage caused by a poor performance and magnify the benefits of a good performance. These effects occurred on a variety of personal measures, but only when an evaluative audience confirmed the augmenting and discounting value of the handicap. They did not occur when the audience did not support these interpretations. Second, the findings show that the attributions audiences make about other people's behavior help determine the reputation they build with those people. Explaining behavior is an interpersonal process that has significant interpersonal and intrapersonal consequences.

APPENDIX A
GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

None of us needs to be reminded of the importance of first impressions in determining the quality of the interactions we have with others. Social psychologists have recognized the significance of first impressions and have learned a great deal about how people form judgments about a variety of personality characteristics, such as sociability and friendliness. At this point, however, very little is known about how people form impressions of traits relevant to academic and occupational settings, such as intelligence and cognitive-analytical abilities. First impressions may be particularly important in these settings, where the perceptions that others form of a person may have long lasting consequences for him or her. For instance, an individual may never be given the opportunity to overcome a negative impression created during a college admission interview if it results in not being accepted to the school.

In today's study we are hoping to learn more about how people use and combine various kinds of information to make judgment's about another person's cognitive-analytical abilities. To do this we are creating a simulated interaction here in the lab. You will be taking part in the session with a second participant who reported to another room on this floor. Each of you will be randomly assigned a role to play in the study, as either the Perceiver or the Target. The Perceiver will be the impression former. This individual will receive several pieces of information about the Target person and use this information to form an impression of the Target's cognitive-analytical ability. The Target person's job during the session will be to provide the information the Perceiver using in forming his/her impression. This information will include the Target's score on a test of cognitive-abilities which he/she will complete, along with responses to a series of questionnaires and self-descriptions. The Perceiver will use all of this information in making a judgment about the Target.

You and your partner will not meet face to face at any point in the session. Instead, the two of you will

communicate only through written materials. The experiment is set up this way so that we can carefully control the type and quantity of information that our Targets and Perceivers have about one another across different sessions. While the situation we are creating here in the lab is more structured than most everyday interactions, we believe it will provide useful information about what goes on in real world settings.

We will make the role assignments in a few minutes and at that time you will be given details about the role you will be playing. If you think you would like to participate in the study, please read and sign this informed consent form. It states that the procedures of the study have been explained to you and you agree to take part.

APPENDIX B
TARGET ROLE INSTRUCTIONS

As the Target Person, your task during the session will be to provide the Perceiver with information about your cognitive-analytical abilities. When forming an impression of you, the Perceiver will have access to two types of information. The first will be your performance on the Feldman-Collier Cognitive-Analytical Skills Battery (FCCASB), which is a test of cognitive-analytical abilities. The FCCASB was recently developed here at the University and has been shown to be a reasonably valid measure of general analytical skills. The format of the test is similar to the SAT, but shorter. It contains sections on logical and analytical reasoning, drawing inferences from information, vocabulary, along with some mathematics. The FCCASB is computer presented and scored so you and the Perceiver will be able to find out immediately how you did.

The second type of information will be your responses to a series of questionnaire items regarding your cognitive-analytical skills in academic and other settings. You will complete these questionnaires following the FCCASB. The Perceiver will receive all of this information and use it in making his/her judgments about you.

We also have a second goal for today's study, which is related to the FCCASB test. Since the FCCASB was developed only recently, we are interested in how performance on it is influenced by changes in the conditions under which it is administered. Currently we are looking at how variation in the amount of time given to complete the test affects scores. To do this, some participants are being given a reduced time allotment, which represents 20% less than the normal performance time. Other participants are being given the standard, full time allotment to complete the test. By comparing the scores of individuals in these two groups it will be possible to determine the impact of time reduction on performance.

Whether you are in the full or reduced time allotment condition will be determined randomly. However, since we are interested in the pure effect of changes in performance

time and not the effect of your expectations about the time you have, you will not be told which group you are in until after completing the test. As you can imagine, knowing which condition you are in beforehand might affect your performance for reasons other than the fact you simply had less time to work. To avoid this, we decided to withhold this information until after the test is over. After you complete the test, your partner, the Perceiver, will also find out into which of the time allotment conditions you were placed.

The procedure for the remainder of the session will be as follows. You will first complete the FCCASB in either the reduced or full time allotment condition. Your responses then will be scored, you will find out how you did, and in which time allotment condition you were placed. Next you will complete some questionnaires about yourself and your performance on the test. Information about your test score, your time allotment condition and your responses to one of the questionnaires will then be presented to the Perceiver, who will use it in forming an impression of your cognitive-analytical skills. At that point the session will be complete. It will not be necessary for you to meet with the Perceiver at any point in the session. Is the procedure clear to you?

APPENDIX C
SELECTED ITEMS FROM THE FCCASB

Feldman-Collier Cognitive Analytical Skills Battery
General Instructions

You are about to begin the Feldman-Collier Cognitive-Analytical Skills Battery, a recently developed and validated test of cognitive-analytical intelligence. The test items have a multiple choice format. The question is presented first, followed by the answer alternatives. When answering an item, read it carefully and then examine the possible responses. Only then should you choose your response.

The test questions are presented by computer. However, you will place your responses on the answer sheet provided to you. Once you answer an item, bubble in the corresponding space on your scan sheet.

You will able to completely control the presentation of the test items using two of the keys on the keyboard. The key marked **PgDn** will move you down to the next test item. The key marked **PgUp** will move you up to the previous item.

You will have **20 minutes** to complete as many of the items as you can. However, random guessing at answers is not advised, since **you will be penalized 1/4 point for each item that you answer incorrectly**.

Section A: Logical Reasoning

Directions. Section A contains logical reasoning problems. You will be given brief statements or passages and will be required to evaluate the reasoning involved. In some instances, more than one choice will appear to be a possible answer. You are to choose the best answer. Use common sense and reasonableness in making your selection.

Passage A

> The theory that the subconscious is simply the unsymbolized suggests the desirability of adequate verbalization at the earliest possible stage of emotional development. It is the nameless fear and frustrations that defy analysis.

1) The author of this passage would most likely agree that

1) there is nothing to fear but fear itself
2) emotional development starts at birth
3) verbalization is the key to complete emotional development
4) unsymbolized thoughts and emotions cannot be analyzed
5) the subconscious initiates only nameless fears and frustrations

Passage B

Anyone who thinks that ignorance is no excuse isn't paying attention.

2) Therefore:

1) ignorance is an excuse
2) not paying attention is no excuse
3) ignorance comes from not paying attention
4) no one is ignorant
5) ignorance is no excuse

Passage C

Reading is an activity involving the use of the visual apparatus by means of which printed words are recognized.

3) The above definition would be weakened most by pointing out that

1) skimming is form of reading
2) a "nonreader" can recognize words
3) some printed words can be difficult to interpret
4) seeing is necessary for reading
5) lengthy printed words are not easily recognized

Passage D

Juan said, "It takes practice to be a good golfer. It takes practice to develop a good swing. Thus, it takes practice to be a good golfer."

4) Which of the following most closely parallels the logic of the statement?

1) Betsy can bake a good cake if she wants to. Betsy baked a good cake. Thus she must have wanted to bake a good cake.

2) A vote for Senator Cobb is a vote for peace. I voted for Senator Cobb. Thus I want peace.
3) You must work to earn money. You need money to pay the rent. Thus you must work to pay the rent.
4) It costs $200 dollars to buy the TV. It costs $50 dollars to buy the radio. Thus the TV costs more than the radio.
5) It is important to be alert when you take an exam. If you take a cold shower, you will be alert. Thus, you should take a cold shower before you take you exam.

Passage E

No one cheats on all the exams he takes. Some people cheat on most of the exams they take. Most cheat on some of the exams they take. Everyone has cheated on at least one exam he has taken. Cheating is wrong.

5) Which of the following is inconsistent with the preceding facts?

1) Joe has never been caught cheating
2) Cheating is an acceptable procedure
3) Jack is never wrong
4) More people cheat on none of the exams they have taken than cheat on all of the exams they have taken
5) More people cheat on some of the exams they have taken than cheat on most of the exams they have taken.

Passage F

The law of parsimony urges strict economy upon us; it requires that we can never make a guess with two or more assumptions in it if we can make sense with one.

6) The author means:

1) complications arise from economy
2) simplify terminology whenever possible
3) don't complicate a simple issue
4) assumptions are necessarily simple in nature
5) excess assumptions never clarify the situation.

Section B: Personality Inferences

Directions. Section B contains personality inferences questions. For each of the following problems, a person is characterized by a number of traits. From this information, you are to determine whether the other traits listed below apply to the same person.

If the trait applies, bubble in response (1)
If the trait doe not apply, bubble in response (2)
If the answer cannot be determined from the information, bubble in response (3)

Person A

A person is described as understanding, sophisticated, literary, and unhappy.

Do the following traits also characterize this person?

If the trait applies, bubble in response (1)
If the trait doe not apply, bubble in response (2)
If the answer cannot be determined from the information, bubble in response (3)

7) Poetic
8) Conventional
9) Strong
10) Enthusiastic
11) Defiant
12) Restless

Person B

A person is described as stubborn, outgoing, optimistic and arrogant.

Do the following traits also characterize the person?

If the trait applies, bubble in response (1)
If the trait doe not apply, bubble in response (2)
If the answer cannot be determined from the information, bubble in response (3)

13) Intelligent
14) Immature
15) Concerned
16) Responsible

17) Courageous
18) Sincere

Person C

A person is described as careful, witty, analytical and shy.

Do the following traits also characterize the person?

If the trait applies, bubble in response (1)
If the trait doe not apply, bubble in response (2)
If the answer cannot be determined from the information, bubble in response (3)

19) Practical
20) Conforming
21) Sarcastic
22) Moral
23) Aggressive
24) Likeable

Section C: Analytical Reasoning

Directions. Section C contains analytical reasoning problems. Each question or group of questions is based on a passage or set of conditions. In answering some of the questions, it may be useful to draw a rough diagram. For each question, select the best answer choice given.

Passage A

For a dinner party, a hostess needs several different three-bean salads.

Each salad is to contain three types of beans, chosen from garbanzos, chili beans, wax beans, lima beans and kidney beans.

Chili beans and lima beans do not taste good together and therefore are never used in the same salad.

Lima beans and kidney beans do not look good together and therefore are never used in the same salad.

25) How many different salads (using the above ingredients) could the hostess serve that contain lima beans?

1) zero
2) one
3) two

4) three
5) four

Passage B

It takes a degree of courage for a politician to risk his career by introducing legislation requiring registration and licensing of gun possession. While many say that the elimination of private ownership of firearms will cure the sociologic ills of our country, the gun lobby in Washington maintains that it is an invasion of personal liberty.

26) Which of the following is the best argument against national gun registration?

1) it would be difficult to enforce
2) murderers would ignore gun control legislation
3) it is a violation of rights granted in the Constitution
4) most murder occur between individuals that were acquainted with each other before the shooting
5) many homicides are committed without the use of guns

APPENDIX D
PERCEIVER BACKGROUND QUESTIONNAIRE

Several of our Target persons have noted that the procedure is somewhat unbalanced and impersonal, since they are being asked to provide a great deal of information about themselves but never find out anything about their partner, the Perceiver. Since Perceivers are being asked to complete a background questionnaire anyway, we have decided to provide a copy of it to targets to look at while their tests are being graded. You will find the Perceiver's background sheet in the pages which follow.

This questionnaire is designed to gather some personal background information about you which we can present to your partner, the Target Person.

Part A: Personal Information

Name:
Sex: Male Female
Age:
Major:
Class:
Hobbies:
Favorite Movies:
Career Goals:

How much have you enjoyed the session so far?

Not at all :___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___: Very Enjoyable

How worthwhile do you think the session is?

Not at all worthwhile :___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___: Very worthwhile

How interesting do you think the session is?

Not at all interesting :___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___: Very interesting

Part B: Instructions

The next section contains questions designed to insure that you understand the procedure of the study fully.

Which of the roles are you playing in the study?

Perceiver: Yes No
Target: Yes No

Will you be meeting with you partner at any point in the session?

Yes No

At this point you have had a chance to examine the items contained on the FCCASB which the Target is currently completing. Please indicate your feelings about the FCCASB on the following dimensions.

The FCCASB seems to be a valid measure of cognitive/analytical skills.

No, not at all :___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___: Yes, definitely

The FCCASB seems to be a difficult test.

No, not at all :___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___: Yes, definitely

As you read earlier, some of the Target persons in our study are being given 80% of the normal amount of time to complete the FCCASB. You will, of course, not find out whether or not your partner was placed in this condition until later in the session. However, we are interested in assessing the beliefs of our Perceivers about the impact of this time reduction on performance. How do you think a 20% reduction in the amount of time provided to complete the FCCASB would affect a person's performance?

APPENDIX E
PERCEPTIONS QUESTIONNAIRE

Instructions. The following questionnaire items deal with you perceptions of yourself, the FCCASB test you just took and the conditions under which you completed it. Please read each item carefully and place your answers directly on these sheets. Your Partner will see your responses to this questionnaire and use them the impression formation phase of the session.

What role in determining your score on the test did each of the following factors play? (19-point scales)

Your cognitive/analytical abilities.

The amount of time you were given to complete the test.

The difficulty of the test.

Luck.

The amount of effort you put into the test.

APPENDIX F
PERSONAL PERCEPTIONS QUESTIONNAIRE

As you read earlier, we are currently evaluating the properties of the FCCASB under varying performance conditions. One of the things we are interested in is how participants feel while taking the FCCASB and afterward. The following items assess your emotions and self-perceptions. Your responses to these items are exclusively for our own use in evaluating the FCCASB. They will be kept private and will not be seen by the Perceiver at any point in the session.

Please rate how you feel right now on the following scales.

satisfied	:	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	: dissatisfied
happy	:	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	: sad
cheerful	:	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	: depressed
contented	:	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	: discontented
good	:	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	: bad
worried	:	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	: at ease
anxious	:	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	: nonanxious
nervous	:	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	: relaxed
jumpy	:	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	: calm

Please rate how you feel about yourself on the following scales.

I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others.

Strongly agree	:	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	: Strongly disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

I feel that I have a number of good qualities.

Strongly agree	:	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	: Strongly disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.

Strongly agree :___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___: Strongly disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

I am able to do things as well as most other people.

Strongly agree :___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___: Strongly disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

I feel that I do not have much to be proud of.

Strongly agree :___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___: Strongly disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

I take a positive attitude toward people.

Strongly agree :___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___: Strongly disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.

Strongly agree :___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___: Strongly disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

I wish I could have more respect for myself.

Strongly agree :___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___: Strongly disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

I certainly feel useless at times.

Strongly agree :___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___: Strongly disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

At times I think I am no good at all.

Strongly agree :___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___: Strongly disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Please rate yourself on the following traits:

quick-wit :___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___: slow-wit
careful :___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___: careless
smart :___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___: stupid
sharp :___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___: dull
quick :___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___: slow
analytic :___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___: unanalytic
capable :___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___: incapable
competent :___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___: incompetent
active :___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___: passive
strong :___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___: weak
certain :___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___: uncertain
self-guided :___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___: otherguided
pressured :___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___: unpressured
conforming :___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___: nonconform
self-assure :___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___: self-doubt

How valid a measure of cognitive-analytical abilities do you think the FCCASB is?

Not at all valid :___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___: Completely valid

How much did you enjoy working on the FCCASB?

Not at all :___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___: A great deal

Using the little information you currently have about the Perceiver, please rate his/her personality on the following adjectives.

Likeable :___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___: Unlikable
Friendly :___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___: Unfriendly
Critical :___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___: Accepting
Supportive :___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___: Unsupportive

Warm	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	: Cold
Kind	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	: Cruel
Sincere	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	: Insincere
Perceptive	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	: Unperceptive
Accurate	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	: Inaccurate
Logical	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	: Illogical
Reasonable	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	: Unreasonable
Wise	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	: Foolish
Sharp	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	: Dull

APPENDIX G
MANIPULATION CHECKS

Instructions. The following items are designed to insure that the information presented during the session was clear and understandable to participants.

According to the information you received on the computer printout, how much time were you given to complete the test of cognitive-analytical skills?

Less than normal :___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___: More than normal

The normal amount

According to the feedback you received on the computer printout, how well did you perform on the test?

Very Poorly :___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___: Very Well

Which role did you play in the study? (circle one)

Perceiver: yes no
Target: yes no

Which time condition were you placed in? (circle one)

Reduced Nonreduced

Did your partner find out which of the time allotment conditions you were placed in?

No :___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___: Yes

Using what information you have about the Perceiver please try to answer the following questions about him/her:

If a person completed a test under reduced time conditions, would the Perceiver think the performance was especially impressive if the test taker did well on the test?

No, not :___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___: Yes,
necessarily definitely

If a person completed a test under reduced time conditions, would the Perceiver think the performance reflected the person's ability level if the test taker did poorly on the test?

No, not :___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___: Yes,
necessarily definitely

APPENDIX H
SUMMARY OF GENDER EFFECTS

Main effects of gender emerged on attributions to test difficulty ($F(1,171)= 12.11$, $p<.001$) and luck ($F(1,171)= 6.29$, $p<.01$). Females said that their performance was due more to the difficulty of the test ($M=-4.4$) and more to luck ($M= 1.4$) than males did ($Ms= -2.9$ and 0.6 for the difficulty and luck measures). These effects are in line with prior research indicating that females are more likely than males to attribute their performance on academic tests to external causes (Deaux & Emsmiller, 1974).

Some research has shown that self-handicapping occurs among males but not among females, suggesting that in the present study males might be more likely to use handicaps strategically and to be influenced by them after a performance. In a recent review Rhodewalt (1990) argued, however, that while gender differences occur for behavioral handicaps, fewer differences exist in the tendency for males and females to use verbal handicaps, like those measured in this study. Consistent with this conclusion, gender interacted with time allotment only on ratings of enjoyment of the test ($F(1,171)= 5.10$, $p<.03$). This showed that males enjoyed the test more when they had reduced than full time ($Ms= 5.1$ and 3.8), but females showed no difference across time conditions ($M= 4.8$ and 4.8). Gender did not qualify any of the other results to be presented.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Kevin Doherty was born and raised in Orchard Park, New York, a suburb of Buffalo. He moved with his family to Lake Worth, Florida, in 1981, where he completed high school, and then went on to the University of Florida. Kevin received his Bachelor of Science degree in psychology in 1987 and began Ph.D. studies in social psychology later that year. After graduation Kevin will move to Boston and begin work on a three-year study of psychological factors related to smoking cessation.

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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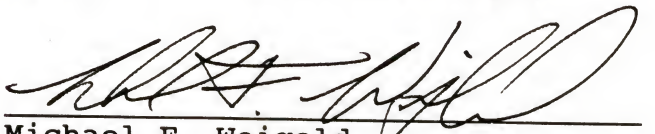

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August, 1992

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